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610.

AN APPEAL

FOR

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.



AN

APPEAL

то

THE NOBILITY AND GENTRY

OF THE

County of Leicester,

IN BEHALF OF

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

DEDICATED BY PERMISSION TO THE DUKE OF RUTLAND.

BY THE

23.

REV. F. MEREWETHER, M. A.



The following remarks plead for judgment, as a whole. Read them through, and determine.—The Author.

ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH:

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1832.

610.



TO HIS GRACE

THE DUKE OF RUTLAND.

MY LORD,

The sentiments contained in the following remarks were originally designed to have formed the subject of a more general appeal: viz. to the Nobility and Gentry of England. Through a channel that was then open to me, it was also at that time my desire to have solicited permission to dedicate them to His Grace the Duke of Wellington, then Prime Minister of England. Circumstances however, which I had rather not dwell on, have altered my wishes and views in both these respects: and, having adopted a more limited application, I feel proud and thankful at the permission I have obtained to inscribe this effort to one, who unites in his own person the character of Head of our County, and

of an attached Member of the Church of England. For the justness of the latter of these two characters, I can appeal with confidence for my testimony to such of our own County, as not content with entertaining, have, in common with your Grace, marked their attachment to the Church to which they belong.

In introducing these remarks therefore to the Public under your Grace's distinguished protection, I feel that I have gained almost every thing for my object that I could, at the outset, possibly desire. For what is the amount of this your Grace's sanction? It is neither more nor less than this. That your Grace hereby sets the example, as the Head of our County, of readiness to listen to the opinion of a Minister of the Church of England, in furtherance of the prosperity of that Church. Such an example will, I doubt not, be followed. Neither have I a moment's doubt, my Lord, that your Grace will add to the favour already conferred, that of bestowing on the following remarks a calm, impartial, dispassionate, reflecting (and perhaps I even dare add, respectful,) perusal. From the fruits

of such perusal, acting on a judgment of which I have myself witnessed the public benefits, it would be affectation in me to dissemble, that I anticipate favourable results to the object of this Publication.

That your Grace may long adorn the station in society which you are appointed by Divine Providence to fill, a pattern of loyal, conscientious obedience to those above you; of dignified urbanity amongst your equals; and of condescending kindness and benevolence to your inferiors; is the sincere wish and fervent prayer of,

My Lord,

Your Grace's obedient Servant,

FRANCIS MEREWETHER.



MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

IT has been already stated in the prefixed Dedication, that an address of a more extensive nature than the present was originally contemplated. In its present limited shape, great cause of joy and thankfulness will belong to it, should it find acceptance with those to whom it is addressed. Whilst the writer's residence obviously points out the local selection here made, as of all others the most appropriate, the following distinguished advantage arises from it to the subject itself: viz. that to his own positive knowledge there are Laymen of station and affluence resident in the county from which he writes, not commonly, if at all, to be surpassed elsewhere, for visible demonstrations of pure, unfeigned, devoted attachment to the Church of which they are members. This knowledge will perhaps be deemed alone sufficient to excuse, if not wholly to justify, the present intrusion: at the same time that it seems to give propriety to the selection of the persons addressed. For it will be seen in the sequel, that the present argument, as a whole, addresses itself solely to the Nobility and Gentry of England, or of some part of it. And even after what has been said of some in our own county, there yet remains abundant matter for respectful and firm appeal. To this, therefore, I proceed without delay.

It cannot have escaped your notice or reflection, that on the all-pervading subject of Religion (taking our community as divided into two classes, the upper and the lower), the Church has amongst its professing members a vast majority, if not nearly the whole, of the former; whilst the ranks of Dissent are mainly swelled by a large proportion of the latter. There are those indeed who will affirm (although any grounds of actual calculation are out of the reach of any one) that the majority of Englishmen are Dissenters. I utterly disbelieve this assertion. might possibly with some safety be conjectured, that of the regular frequenters of public worship on the Lord's Day, one fourth, at least, amongst the lower orders, are in some shape or other either members or frequenters of a Dissenting community. Whilst, on the other hand, not less than nine-tenths of the upper class, and the largest half of the middle rank of attendants on Divine Service, will be found on the Lord's Day within the walls of the Established Church. If this computation be anything like the truth, it may be worth while to trace as briefly as may be (how nearly the enquiry concerns those I address, the sequel will shew*), by what steps this state of things has been reached, and from what causes produced.

I say, by what steps: for it was not always so. Neither has the present state been otherwise than gradually arrived at. Yet at the same time, there are those living, it may safely be asserted, who remember, upon a probable computation, not above one-eighth of the English community professed Dissenters, if so many. History, therefore, is not actually wanted for our present purpose; excepting as far as the causes of what we are alluding to were more remote than the effects.

^{*} See page 64.

In the present instance, however, I own it does not strike me that there is mainly much distance between cause and effect. Of what may be called the *old* Dissenters indeed, the origin must be sought from history: but five-sixths of Dissent, as it now presents itself, I believe to have been produced by three causes, and those all of them *modern* ones.

First—Want of Churches and Chapels connected with the Established Religion, proportionate to the increase of Population.

Secondly—The diminished influence of the Clergy, as Religious Teachers, and otherwise.

And, Thirdly—The rise and growth of rash and overweening sciolism.

To be fully explicit as to the period I am speaking of, I will just state that in some few particulars it will reach back as far as that striking era (it may be said in the history of Christianity), the introduction of Methodism, by John Wesley, in the year 1735—but no farther; and not often so far. With your permission I will now enter upon the three causes adduced, more fully.

First, Want of Churches and Church of England Chapels, proportionate to the increase of Population. This topic will present itself in its most unquestionable shape, if we abstain from carrying its application farther back than thirty years. Between the beginning of that period, and the close of it, the population of England and Wales has increased 4,028,013. In what proportion to this increase, has been that of Church Accommodation given? For the first decade, none worth mentioning: for the second, not exceeding a twenty-fourth: for the third, rather more than a fourth.* Supposing, therefore, an adequate sense of

^{*} The most encouraging and gratifying reflections presented themselves to my mind on this discovery—for a discovery it really was, the manuscript

religion to be in any degree commensurate with the increase of numbers, can the progress of religious Dissent be considered as otherwise than certain, where the largest proportion of accession of means for religious worship provided by the National Church amounts to something short of one-fourteenth of the increase?* Can we even with common fairness, whilst considering the comparative merits or demerits of Dissent, put its modern accession on any other plea than that of sheer necessity? The individual Dissenter, if stripped of all means of influence to remedy the evil he has to complain of, has a fair right, if he pleases, to stop short in any vindication of himself he may think fit to offer, in such plea as the following: Do not press me for other grounds of Dissent, if I plainly tell you, I found I must either worship with the Dissenters or no where. The Church was shut against me, as I could find no place or room in it.+ This is enough on the present head.

having been written long before the blanks were filled up, with anticipations widely different from the actual result. Still, however, the reader ought not on that account to shut up this publication, as if all were done. All is not done. Nearly three out of four of our population, viewed only in its increase between 1821 and 1831, have yet no church room for them: and, as is stated above, a fourteenth part of the whole increase during the last thirty years, remain unaccommodated, exclusive of the former population, for which no modern accession of room is here reckoned, there being none besides the amounts already stated, worth mentioning.

† It is curious to remark how the evil may operate conversely: that is, how it may be fallen back upon in defence of Dissent, when the other weapons of argument have proved powerless. A case of this sort has very lately happened within my own knowledge. A Dissenter, driven from all his other arguments in behalf of himself and his numerous associates, had his dernier ressort in the following words: "But, bless you, Sir! our people could not find room in — Church." The person addressed had no answer to this. He was struck dumb, and ashamed: not for himself individually, but for the Church and Nation to which he belongs.

Secondly, The diminished influence of the Clergy, is offered as one of the reasons for our present state.* There is no part of my present attempt in which I more readily apply myself to those I have undertaken to address, than the topic now before me. For both the disease and the remedy are, in a great degree, from them, and with them. I am treading on tender ground, but I will endeavour to adjust my statement as candidly and impartially as possible. I confess myself strongly impelled by the state of the case to believe that the Nobility and Gentry, as a body, do not manifest such visible tokens of confidence in, and respect for their Clergy, as might be reasonably and naturally expected from them. Whether this be the effect of the Clergy's making nearer approaches to their own rank in society than most other classes, (although what can be more beautiful in the social frame than this blending of ranks, whereby the peculiarities of each are melted into those of the one next below them?) or for what other cause, I will not say: but the fact appears to me manifest. First, the society of this body of men is not much sought by the Laity in general; not so much as might perhaps be for their own benefit in many important respects. May the day indeed never return (for such days perhaps have been) when the Clergyman so far forgets himself and his office as to condescend to be either the convivial associate, or haply the butt of his Patron, the peg whereon to hang his worst attempts at wit. But as the enlightened, well-informed,

^{*} Circumstances urge me to add a remark here at the outset of my argument. It is this. The reader must be assured that I have no local considerations to suggest to me either the choice of my present subject, or the application of it to those now addressed. As far from it as can be; as will be made evident by the contents of the Note at Page 52. Had such indeed been the case, feelings nearest to my heart, and for which I have the deepest grounds, must at once have restrained my pen from the present effort.

reflecting and observing companion of "the rich man's table," every thing that is beneficial and lovely in society may result from his presence. In the vestry, however, where of all places perhaps, as respects temporal matters at least, if not spiritual also, the Clergyman's influence may be found most beneficially prevalent; from some quarter or other there seems to proceed anything rather than willingness to give efficiency and influence to the opinions of the parochial Clergyman. Perhaps this ground of complaint may be applied most justly to the Farmers: but I cannot dissemble my apprehension that it is in some degree at least, a feeling reflected from the higher departments of the Laity. From whatever quarter it comes, however, or in whatsoever way generated, I am afraid it can only be described as one made up of some degree of groundless jealousy. I say groundless: for what reason is there for it? Can any member of a parish vestry be easily pointed out, who is in reality less an object of just, well-founded jealousy, than the parochial Clergyman? First of all, he stands quite alone: actually, abstractedly speaking, without a single ally. For what is his position in a parish vestry? In the first place, he is by law the Chairman of it: and therefore, however imperfectly this his relation is understood, and studiously as it is too often endeavoured to be kept out of sight, in this particular character he stands alone. Here indeed, I will allow, is some little apparent ground of jealousy: yet, be it remembered, the jealousy, such as it is, should be transferred to the right quarter: viz. to the law of the land, rather than to the Clergyman, who is only its agent and minister. But, if in this single character there be any supposed room for it, let it be farther recollected, that every vote in the vestry may be, and but for the exercise of a considerable portion of discreet

and forbearing judgment and temper, on his part, often will be, against the Clergyman. How isolated then does he stand, and how very ready are the opportunities of gratifying this jealousy, if it exists! For its existence I can give no other reason in addition to the one already assigned, than the following very striking, and perhaps after all, the real one: namely, that over and above the reluctance too often visible amongst mankind against authorities, this feeling perhaps involves a silent homage to the sovereign majesty of that religion, for imparting which the parochial Clergyman is the authorized and duly-appointed chosen vessel. If this indeed be an influence to be jealous of, there is room for it. But I ask with seriousness, Are Ministers objects of reasonable jealousy on this account?

The plain truth however is, that any causes of jealousy ranging themselves under, and probably resolvable into this, so far from being really such, constitute the very ground and reason why the Parishioners in vestry ought to wish for the presence and assistance of their Clergyman. nently qualified by education; released from unworthy prejudices by station; and invested with an important part of his ministerial office—that of endeavouring to reduce all classes under a "godly union"-he, above all inhabitants of a parish, is placed in a most beneficial position for becoming a party to vestry deliberations: he, above all men, is obviously pointed out as a middle link between the payers and receivers of the poor's-rate: an arbitrator in their differences: a guide in their perplexities: and neither more nor less than a key-stone and cementing bond to the whole. If, then, any portion of the Laity discountenance or impede the operation of this main-spring, they cannot be acting wisely towards that department of our social scheme which consists in its parochial administration.

In the matter of the temporal rights of the Clergy, amongst the upper ranks of the Laity, and from them moving downwards to the Farmers and others, there is a great deal of misapplied, if I ought not more correctly to say, unjust feeling. In every transaction but religion, are men commonly blamed for investigating, ascertaining, and claiming their just rights! And yet, do the National teachers of religion escape censure when they do this? Rather when a Clergyman thinks proper to do all he can to ascertain, and having so ascertained, to demand, his dues; is not the outcry against him loud and deep, as being a grasping, rapacious, worldly-minded extortioner? And vet, "what does he more than others?" Even as stated above, however, the cause is, after all, not a common one. Whether from the natural, professional, constitutional forbearance of the Clergy, or from the hostility of public opinion to their just rights, I will not say; but the fact is, (and I am confident those here addressed will be the last to deny it), the Clergy, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, do not what has just been stated,-do not microscopically examine into their full rights, so as rigidly and nicely to claim the uttermost farthing. In a large majority of cases I am persuaded, and so I firmly believe ye are persuaded also, they "forgive a large part of the debt;" whether they can afford it or not. Yet in what they do obtain, there have been times (I will not say they are those now present; but there have been times) when even this has not been rendered with the alacrity and cheerfulness which the ministerial office, and its public services, might lead the Clergy fairly to expect and challenge.

On points more strictly professional, connected with the "influence of the Clergy," it is essential that I should briefly go back to the farthest limit of my enquiry: viz. to

the date of the first commencement of Methodism. For the diminished influence of the Established Ministry, arising, as the Methodists would say, from their own remissness in their duty, is the only fair ground of defence for their separation that sect have to stand upon. Doctrine they cannot for a moment maintain as a ground of defence: it sinks under them with the slightest touch. And how did their distinguished founder (as distinguished he certainly was) conduct himself on this point? Is there any attempt of his on record towards making a public appeal to the body of whose neglect he complained, before he commenced and persevered in his wide-spreading separation? Is there any transmitted proof of endeavour, on his part, to remedy the evil he supposed to exist in any or in many ways that might have been devised, far less exceptionable than the one he took? If he were sincere, as we are bound to presume he was, in his desire to see the Clergy more useful in their appointed spheres, than they were; and in the opinion that this was almost all that was wanted; he could not readily have devised a mode less likely to produce improvement, than the one he acted on. Their jealousy, as a body, was almost sure to be roused by the part he took, and not without reason: and the consequence has been a schism of a most wide-spreading nature, which has struck at the root of the legitimate influence of some of the most zealous, upright, and faithful Ministers of God's Word and Sacraments that, I will venture to say, these realms possess.

The "diminished influence of the Clergy," however, must not all be laid at the door of Methodism. Far from it. The foes of the Clergy are too often of their own household. Perhaps I have adopted too strong a phrase in using the word foes: let me say then, lukewarm or hollow friends. Where do we find in the Laity, as a whole,

any strong public demonstrations of desire, on their part, to strengthen the hands of their Clergy in their specific, legitimate functions? Do we find the parish Pastor often consulted as a guide to conscience,* resorted to as an almoner, or co-operated with in exhortation to the public duties of religion? Alas! in so few cases (for that there are cases, I am well persuaded: yet so few) that the minority, valuable and highly estimable as they are individually, to the interests of sound, peaceable religion, are numerically not worth mentioning in the light of a proportion to the whole.+ That those in affluence and station, who whilst they profess to be members of the National Church, thus hang back from public marks of countenance and support to the Ministers of it, cannot have much practical sense of any value to be derived from the public front of religion itself; the bare fact is sufficient to prove. Yet, if these do not lay much stress on outward visible religion, they may at least, perhaps, like social peace. And how importantly each of these two things acts upon the other, it will be the aim of a future stage of these remarks to shew. Enough, I trust, has been said on this topic, as far as a mere statement of the existence of the evil goes; which, as will be seen hereafter, is only the least part of the present design: the remedy being the chief object.

^{*} The importance of this branch of the Clerical office is very great; and if more appealed to, would probably have a very beneficial influence on the tone of morals amongst the Clergy themselves. The casuistical department of Divinity is a very momentous one, and in common with all others requires study, diligence, discretion and reflection. Some tender, sensitive spirits indeed might sink under the burden of frequent appeals of this sort. But the general effect of them would doubtless be that of presenting to the Clerical mind in its full force the influential appeal of the Apostle, "Thou which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?"

[†] I never can write on this subject without thinking of the name of one amongst the Laity, whose "praise is in all the Churches": in all the English Churches, that is, from the Ganges to the Thames.

Thirdly, The rise and growth of rash and over-weening sciolism, is a very moving, influential cause why the religion of the upper ranks in our National community is that of a far less majority of the whole Nation than it has been, and I am not afraid of being able to shew before I conclude, always ought to be. It really is not possible to convey an adequate idea of the extensive prevalence of this topic. Human language could not describe it, or words be brought forward of sufficient comprehension to grasp the extreme limits of it. All that is in my power however shall be advanced to do it justice.

In the first place, the disciples of this immensely extensive school of sciolists, building upon the popular maxim in religion of "Liberty of Conscience," hold the principle that every man has a right to think on this subject as he likes: that is, in other words, that the learner has as good a right to form, and not only to form, but to promulge, his opinion on religious subjects, as the teacher. For, although on sober reflection you will hardly believe it, the fact really is, that the meaning of this principle as daily and hourly applied, is, -not that a man may come to his own conclusions after having taken due pains to form a just judgement; but that every private person's own opinion, whether supported or unsupported by authorities, whether formed with or without assistance, with or without deliberation; is to him to be the test of truth: and by this test, it is maintained, he ought to stand or fall: so that any one who questions the propriety of his doing so, seeks to curtail and abridge, if not utterly to destroy, his inalienable natural right, as a rational, sentient being.

Now it cannot be questioned that the persons here addressed possess abundant capabilities of judging of the reasonableness of this principle, thus broadly maintained. Let me respectfully address the individual judgment of each of this class of readers, as enlightened men and reflecting Christians, in the following Queries:-Is the Bible on every point of faith and practice so indisputably clear, as to enable every man of himself to determine on its precise right meaning, and apply it accordingly? In points of faith, is there no tittle of obscurity and difficulty? In points of practice, is there no room left in this our probationary state, for even the sincere (but ill-informed) reader to make mistakes? Is there no part of the Bible, of which the Bible itself says, there are some things "hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do the other scriptures, unto their own destruction?" I speak as to wise men: and respectfully be it said, I need not wait your answer: I feel assured of what it must be, because ye are reasonable men. Let your own hearts and lips contradict me, if I am wrong. Your answer is this: The Bible is not a Book indisputably clear throughout. It has difficulties, many of them not yet solved by the learned. In points of faith, obscurity is found. In points of practice, doubt arises. And if this be your answer, it may further be asked, Can the sciolist be right, whilst he claims for the most unreflecting the privilege to think as they like in religion; and teaches them that they run no sort of hazard in thus broadly and unrestrictedly exercising this privilege?

If anything like justice has been done you here, you must already have come to the conclusion, that the Christian body must be made up of teachers and learners. For I am satisfied you will not be prompt to say: "Because there are obscurities yet uncleared, doubts yet unsolved, therefore none ought to be selected or consulted, as guides in these difficulties and doubts." You are not the persons to say: "Because the Scripture is in some portions of it as 'a light

that shineth in a dark place,' therefore we must make no attempt to increase the light, and diminish the darkness." Rather (I am sure you will be ready to rejoin) do we not read of men whose business it is to "give light in the house?" as well as an express appointment of an order of men for that purpose from the Divine Founder of our religion? If, again, no more than justice has been done to your opinions, let your attention be solicited to the following appeal, which I beg to be considered as involving the whole spirit and gîst of my present undertaking.

You are placed by the favour of Providence in a very important position before a Christian community. Distinguished above a large proportion of your fellow-countrymen and fellow-Christians by birth; by inheritance; by property; by education; by sound practical wisdom; ye are presented to the observation and benefit of thousands in the most interesting and engaging relations. But let me go farther. You appear in our community, as the presidents and judges in our local courts of justice; as daily administrators of the law to the benefit of the injured and oppressed; as associates of the rich; friends to the poor: with your heads, hands and hearts busied in the multiform plans of local charity. I wish I could go on in my description, and add: uniformly exemplary in countenancing the diffusion of religion. If this addition could have been made to the enumeration, with the same entire freedom from hesitation and reserve with which all the other traits in the picture have been introduced; it is much more than probable I should have been spared the pains of writing, and you the trouble of being asked to read, the present remarks. But it is because I have doubts on this point, which shall be candidly unfolded in the sequel, that I still proceed. Yet I proceed not without adding the remark; that in all I have said, and all I have to say (unless where express exception is made to the contrary), the appeal is to you in the light of competent *Umpires and Arbitrators* on the matters at this point about to be brought before you. Listen, I entreat you, whilst I plead my cause (or rather, shall it not be said, the cause of charity and peace?) at your bar.

It may perhaps safely be assumed, that we have got so far as to be agreed, that in religion there must be Teachers and Learners. Now you cannot be ignorant that a vast number in this kingdom, besides the established Clergy, are found taking possession of the teacher's chair in religion. Are all or any of these competent to doing so? is a natural question: a question on which, be assured, it is not sought of you to arbitrate. Neither is it sought to obtain a decision from you on the truth of the two following principles about to be laid down. All that is proposed is, to place before you certain grounds for those two principles, of which I am satisfied you, as a body, are better judges than ninety-nine out of a hundred of the rest of the community, who yet presume not only to think without information, contrary to these two principles, but every day of their lives to act on this their opinion. The principles I lay down as the result of my conviction, are the following: First, that in this country, according to what I understand to be Christian Politics, none ought conscientiously to be Public religious Teachers in English parishes, but the established Clergy only: and, Secondly, as wholly independent of civil or political considerations, and resting solely on Scriptural and Ecclesiastical ones; that none can with undoubting safety preach Christ's Gospel, as authorized Teachers of it, but episcopally-ordained Clergy only.

Once more (for clearness' sake: though surely it can

hardly be necessary), let me say, your assent is not asked to these conclusions. Your verdict on them even is not solicited. It is simply affirmed, that respecting the nature of the testimony they claim to stand on, those now addressed are fully competent judges.

These then are the testimonies to be adduced in favour of the above positions. The first is, an inspired Apostle, St. Paul, is found cautious of giving offence, and breaking peace and order, by "stretching beyond his measure:" a fact sufficient to demonstrate, that even in his extraordinary case a limit was assigned to the sphere of his labours, which limit it became not him to over-pass: and from the early annals of Christianity, as recorded both in Scripture and other authentic history, it appears that the Christians always avoided opposition to the political regulations of States. Be it observed, I treat these two branches contained in the last sentence, as making up together, for my purpose, one testimony. Secondly, seven Letters are met with written, at the latest, within ten years of the death of St. John, the last of the Apostles; wherein express allusion is made, and over and over again repeated, to the three orders of the Christian Ministry then existing, Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons, as the then platform of the Christian Church. Now, let it be repeated once more, I do not wish you to draw your inference, and pronounce your judgment, from St. Paul's not thinking it right to exceed his measure, or from the political non-interference of the early Christians, on the one hand; nor from the early record after the Apostle's times, of the existence of the triple Ecclesiastical regimen of Christian Ministers, on the other. But I ask you respectfully, as persons accustomed to sit and hear and weigh evidence-versed in the computation of probabilitiesand practised in combining particulars so as to frame from

them one general conclusion: - Are not these kind of authorities—is not this species of testimony, the precise testimony that you should look for as of the highest value, in the case to which it applies? I ask respectfully, Is there not here presented the greatest possible reason for adopting limitation to the exercise of the Christian Ministry, and for not violating without very sufficient cause, civil arrangement in a Christian Nation, on the one hand; and for adhering to the triple division of the Ministry, if no strong reason can be shewn to the contrary, on the other?* Can any more proper, or higher authorities be readily appealed to, than those just named? But still more, let me ask, as the crowning question of the whole, Can those be pronounced competent or warranted to fly in the face of regulations so sanctioned and illustrated, who have not first thought it necessary to search into the foundations of early principles, early usage, and early authority?

And yet, as we are now on the topic of "sciolism," I scruple not to affirm: Of the number of those who depart from the Church of England, whilst she is sedulously active in pleading, and aiming daily to exemplify, these highly authorized principles, and to act under them; not one in a hundred is there, no, not one in a hundred, who has either bestowed five minutes consideration on the principles, or

^{*} It may be interesting to you to be informed that Calvin, the first up-rooter of Episcopacy, expressed himself concerning it in the following words: "Talem si nobis Hierarchiam exhibeant, in quâ sic emineant Episcopi ut Christo subesse non recusent, ut ab illo tanquam Unico Capite pendeant, et ad ipsum referantur, &c. tum, verò, nullo non anathemate dignos fatear, si qui erunt, qui non eam reverenter summâque obedientià observant."—Quoted by Bishop Hall in his Works, (Vol. IX. pp 512, 513, Pratt's Edition) from Calvin de Necessit. Eccles. Reformandæ. How far this qualification of Calvin's is maintainable at the bar of sober sense and reflection, as furnishing grounds to private judgment, whereon to determine respecting separation, I leave to the private judgment itself of those competent to weigh it duly in all its bearings, to determine.

knows one tittle of the history of the practice. Even of the Dissenting Teachers themselves, it may be questioned, whether a vast majority of them have ever bestowed a thought on St Paul's example in this particular, as worthy of the slightest imitation; whether still more have ever historically investigated the non-disturbing principles of the Christians of the first two centuries; and lastly, whether the number is not equally great of those, who have never looked into the early document that has been referred to, viz. the seven Letters written within ten years of St. John's decease?* so little value do they affix to it; for I will not say so little value are they interested in affixing to it, as long as they are the leaders of their present party, although in proportion as that document is admitted, or the contrary, their cause must fall or stand. Not trespassing on your judicial functions so far as to ask whether either or both my two positions are established by these authorities, I simply solicit your judgment on the following plain point: Can these authorities (whatever they prove) be fitly despised, or can those be doing right, who in point of fact go directly, without enquiry, in direct opposition to them?

To the minds of that portion of those I address, to whom any part of this short argument is new, no slight cause of congratulation will, I trust, by this time have arisen at the thought of their being members of a Church, which studiously keeps these points closely in her view: and which alike regardless of the unfounded charge of popish arrogance, pomp, or superstition, on the one hand; or the not less unfounded imputation of separating faction, or inno-

^{*} It may be desirable to remark here, that a still earlier writing, that of a Letter to the Corinthians by Clement, which some even proposed to introduce into the Canon of Scripture, as the writing of an Apostolical man, is on the subject of Religious Divisions, and refers distinctly to the triple Ministry of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deucons.

vating meanness or apostacy, on the other; (for as to separating faction or apostacy, as a Nation, we separate from no one, nor apostatize from any branch of the Catholic Church of Christ,) follows as her guide in the essentials of government and worship, as well as of faith, the first ages of christianity, and those almost exclusively. Yes, it may be pronounced the great, if not under the present circumstances of christendom, the peculiar boast of the English Church, to have stood firm and steady in its adherence to the safe model of the primitive ages of christianity: those ages, namely, which whilst there is no slight reason to believe they had the miraculous support of Divine Providence to their cause, are exempt on the other hand from all possible charge of secular motives for the practices they adopted; being themselves objects of persecution, instead of honour, wealth, and worldly advancement. And yet, I repeat once more (for the idea cannot be too often enforced), the great bulk of those who separate from the English Church, and not only of them, but there is good reason to fear, of their teachers also, do not know from original and safe authorities what those practices were. So that if the habits of those who walked immediately in the steps of Christ and His Apostles are worth following, I feel sure your sound judgment may be relied on for allowing, that they cannot be said to deal fairly by a Church professing to follow this pattern, who have not availed themselves of the opportunity of comparing the copy with the original.

But, it will be said, and this, I fear, is too much the spirit of modern Dissent, especially that influential department of it which has been so often alluded to: "It is worse than useless to talk of what the practices of the primitive Church were, if we look in vain into the Church of England for its pure, and simple, and self-denying piety." The

implied charge, if just, is a serious one: and if the Church of England can be shewn, either through its ordinances, its ministers, or even the great bulk of its professing members, openly to discountenance or disown the standard of piety held up in the Primitive Church; then indeed all her external beauty and resemblance must give way: her lamp must be put out; and the nation will do wisely to look to other and better light. But can this charge be established? Can it be made appear, that either through its governors, its services, its ministers, or the bulk of its members, the standard of primitive piety is wholly, or even extensively, kept out of sight? Far from it, I am persuaded: and so must every one be, possessed of ordinary discernment and impartiality. Whereas, on the other hand, if it should be found that in some, and those not a few cases, the rejection of primitive and Apostolical authority is accompanied with scriptural unsoundness of doctrine; the evil of departure from the purest model presents itself in a greatly aggravated state. And thus the practical mischief will be discovered in this two-fold shape of quitting a system of church economy, which has such high authority to recommend it, without a single solid disadvantage that I have ever met with, firmly established, to justify departure from it; and in the very act of quitting it, exhibiting neither more nor less than the moving cause of all the "sciolism" complained of, and presented to notice under the present head.

It may be worth while to expend a few words on this point, to shew (that is), that the rejection of Episcopacy has been the prolific parent of all the religious "sciolism," now so much to be lamented and deprecated. Without closely adhering to *strict* chronological accuracy, thus the matter stands. First, Calvin the father of modern schism

(as, amidst all his distinguished merits as a protestant Reformer he may well be called), was the first to substitute Presbyterianism for Episcopacy, after the latter had been of fifteen hundred years standing; upon the plea however, let it never be forgotten, (above all, let it never be forgotten by his innumerable followers in the path of schism,) of necessity.* For if he could have retained Episcopal Ordination and Government in the first instance, he would not, it is recorded, have attempted to set up anything short of it. This is a well-known, indisputable, historical fact. Then, the example being once set, next came the spirit of Independency: then followed in order, Brownists, Baptists, Unitarians, Methodists, Arminian and Calvinistic, and lastly, Primitive Methodists or Ranters. All these took their rise from the abandonment of Episcopacy, and the thirst for schism which grew immediately out of it. Whereas, it may be safely asserted of Episcopacy, from its first commencement in the first century, as its upholders say, or in the second, as its impugners are forced to allow; that since the cessation of miracles, it has never ceased to be associated with the great bulk of learning, philosophy, and reflection, such as has been possessed from time to time by each succeeding age and generation.

Enough, it is conceived, has been said to shew the extent to which religious sciolism exists; the important principles and sources of religious truth it overturns; and the causes, but for which, as far as poor weak human vision may be allowed to exercise itself, it would never have existed at all, much less attained to its present universal sway. You will doubtless be ready to admit that we live in a sciolistic age altogether; in which every person gives his opinion on every subject, without either waiting or caring for the

^{*} See on this subject, Preface to Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity.

information of those whose business it is to be specially and accurately acquainted with what is spoken of. But I am not afraid to conclude this topic with the remark; that on no one subject whatever does this sciolistic spirit so palpably shew itself, as on that of religion.

And now, having completed this three-fold investigation, it is time that I should answer the natural question: Cui Bono? For what purpose are these sentiments addressed to us? The answer I beg respectfully to adduce. It will consist in the suggestion of practical remedies for the evils (if evils you have by this time determined them to be,) which it has been endeavoured to delineate in the foregoing remarks.

First, then, on the subject of want of Church of England Edifices, proportionate to the increase of population. Notwithstanding what has been done within the last few years towards the increase of these edifices (more, questionless, than ever was done in any one half century since the introduction of christianity into these realms: yet still, how disproportionate to the immensely-increased wealth as well as numbers of the country!) it is a very prevailing conviction amongst those who have thought most on this subject, that the work was begun too late: that, as is too often the case with all remedies, the evil sought to be redressed had spread too far for the cure to be half so effectual as it otherwise might have been. Far, however, is this from affording just cause why the full tribute of praise and grateful recollection should be withheld from those who, though late, set their zeal, their charity, their public spirit, their courage, to the holy work. Nor is the just degree of thankfulness to be kept back from others who, in their respective measures and degrees, co-operated in the good work, after it had been set on foot. I wish, amongst the number of the supporters of the object of building Churches

and Chapels connected with the Establishment, I could place a unanimous Legislature, or at least, a unanimous House of Commons; with the few exceptions of Dissenters then in the Lower House, who may claim in fairness to be excepted. Let thanks, however, be returned to the majority in both Houses, and to the last resort of the Legislature; and so let this matter pass. Late as the work has been begun, let us now see how it presents itself at the moment this is written, as a remedy yet remaining to be resorted to.

Most happily for the present undertaking, a great deal yet remains capable of being done. For although we are already an increased, we are yet still an increasing population. Although from the necessary work having been resorted to only at the eleventh hour, hundreds and thousands may, in the mean time, have swelled the ranks of Dissent, and been lost irrecoverably to the Church; although hereditary Dissent may also have thus been lamentably generated, vet the thousands of which the rising generation, even amongst those not alienated from the Church consist, may be deemed at least, in a great degree, recoverable. Churches and Chapels are built and thrown open to these, there is every fair probability, it is to be hoped, that they will not "refuse to enter in:" especially if we consider how reasonable a thing it is to calculate on such readiness in that large number trained in the several affiliations of that important society, to which many of those now addressed are contributors: viz. the Incorporated National Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church. And in addition to these, if Churches and Chapels for the established religion keep ever so reasonable pace with the future wants of the population, room will be made for a large sect of our countrymen; viz. the Absenters: and thereby a fresh appeal be made to increased diligence on the part of the Clergy, in gaining the entrance of this class within walls made ready and competent for their reception; walls at present, in a vast number of places, not to be met with.

So great a demand then still remaining to be met, with regard to Churches and Chapels; and so much of remedy for the evil now before us being actually still within our reach; the question remains: In whose hands does this remedy lie? Mainly, I do not scruple to say, in your's.

First, as to those of your order who have seats in either House of Parliament, not a few facilities remain to be afforded from thence. Pecuniary aid indeed, either the real, or at least in Parliament supposed, poverty of the nation, as a whole, seems at present to put out of the question. But many others could be named, and might be stated, if sought for from proper quarters.-Secondly, as joint associates with others in personal pecuniary aid to a Voluntary Society, already formed for this object; a vast deal more may be done, than has been done; and still more by directly local contributions to the same object.—Thirdly, by giving weight, either personally or otherwise, through your tenants in vestry, towards supplying reasonable support either for erection of new buildings, or which is in very many cases quite as beneficial, enlargement of, or provision for increased accommodation in, old ones.—Lastly, by a measure of directly personal generosity, which by its magnitude might absorb the second and third just mentioned, and which is of so much importance, that I crave permission to submit my remarks on it somewhat largely.

Thus, then, I state my point. It must surely be known to some now appealed to (such, at least, as were themselves parties to the enactment), that during the last session a

Statute has passed through the two Houses of Parliament, and received the Royal assent, intituled "An Act to amend and render more effectual an Act passed in the Seventh and Eighth Years of the reign of His late Majesty, intituled ' An Act to amend the Acts for building and promoting the building of additional Churches in populous Parishes." Amongst the provisions of this Statute, having heard of one in particular, projected at a very early stage in the construction of the Bill, from an individual whose opinion on most subjects, especially those directly connected with his profession, is entitled to considerable weight; after much reflection I formed the following opinion of it, which I made an attempt through my valuable friend to get conveyed to an influential quarter, in order to having it duly weighed. But first let me give the purport of the projected clause itself: viz. to empower His Majesty's Commissioners for building Churches, under certain conditions, to grant to any person or persons building and endowing any Church or Chapel, the perpetual Patronage of such Church or Chapel, with the Cure of Souls annexed over a certain district in the parish in which such Chapel should be built, to be transferred to the Minister so appointed.* The opinion I formed on it, as expressed to my friend, was as follows: Feeling a strong objection against the existing Patron having another Patron introduced into his sphere of patronage, without his consent, when considerations had been originally given for this right; so that to curtail this sphere without such consent at least, seemed to savour of injustice: and having a strong, though as I believe, not wholly ungrounded primâ facie impression, amounting

^{*} There is no clause or clauses precisely to this effect in the Act just cited, although powers, such as the above, are met with in the Act, differently allotted.

almost to jealousy and suspicion, against ad libitum Patrons, which will be described more fully hereafter: I suggested the wisdom of confining this patronage to persons who had property in the parish they proposed to benefit: thus only giving the trust of patronage (for a trust it assuredly is of a very momentous kind) to such as had an obvious and legitimate tie to those with whom they wished to be placed in a new relation. Whether the suggestion was a good or bad one; whether or not it ever reached the quarter I was desirous it should; certain it is, no enactment corresponding with it is to be found in the Statute just passed. The suggestion and opinion, however, are introduced here solely for the sake of giving weight to the remarks about to be offered on the subject before us; taking for a ground-work the Statute as now passed.

I have gone the length of avowing an impression, amounting almost to jealousy, against ad libitum Patrons. It is fit that the grounds of this should be explained. I cannot conceal from myself the unworthy motives that, under the circumstances of our nature, are too liable to act on such persons; a thirst for lucre, or something bordering on fanaticism. With regard to the first, any one possessed of it as a leading motive, cannot possibly be fully alive to the obligations which so sacred a trust as that of ecclesiastical patronage involves: and with respect to the second, a sorer curse could not perhaps be inflicted on the peace of the Church of England, than patronage exercised under the influence of this spirit. It must lead infallibly to party dissension, and ill will. Any influence, therefore, detached from the pure and legitimate influence of property, seems very liable to alloy from some inferior, unworthy motive: and with this impression, whilst it does not become me to speak otherwise than respectfully of what is now a Law, yet it may

be allowed to say that I have seen no reason to retract the objection I formed originally to this projected clause of the Bill. And even supposing the purest and most unalloyed motives to prevail in the first attainment of this patronage; yet the future possession of it will be still more liable to the operation of either or both of the two motives that have been named, where the tie of property is not super-added.

Yet, taking the Statute as it is, the sincere expression of opinion here given will at once account for the hope that the distinguished and affluent persons now addressed, will, where they have property, and where the need of Churches or Chapels, or Church-room is felt, either alone or in conjunction with others, avail themselves of its powers. This will be to give it a safe, legitimate, and wholesome operation. It will be sanctifying the earthly tie already existing between landlord and tenant, with the addition of a far higher bond of sympathy, respect and affection: and will do more, I verily believe, both towards strengthening the Church of England, and uniting the upper classes with the lower, than any one step which can be named.

A very striking circumstance too presents itself to my reflection in the very act of now writing. A large portion of those members of our community, who have become enriched by the modern introduction of manufacturing industry, are now become parts of the distinguished classes here appealed to. They form now a portion of the Gentry of the land. To them, therefore, I am more than ordinarily warranted in appealing on the following grounds. From a various combination of circumstances; probably in part from catching the spirit of the gregarious system whence this wealth has been derived; these persons have not unfrequently themselves been drawn within the influence of Dissent: and more, possibly, from secular association than

from any strongly imbibed influence of reflecting, religious conviction, have to an extent much to be lamented, enrolled themselves amongst the Dissenters. And yet they are not to be considered in any way exempt from ability to answer the appeal made to them a few pages back, in common with those of their rank and order. They are, that is, fully capable of passing a sound judgment on the question: Whether the first ages of christianity, before that connection between Church and State took place, on the mischiefs and dangers of which the Dissenters have much to say; whether, I say, the first ages, and especially the earliest portion of them, are not the likeliest of all periods to furnish models either in faith, worship, or discipline, "most agreeable with the institution of Christ?"* To such of them, therefore, as have already joined the ranks of Dissent, I cannot refrain from suggesting here a grave and reflecting re-consideration of what they have done. Whether they have been doing well or not in quitting the communion of the National Church? If they should (happily, in my mind) conclude on the negative side of this question, then the few following remarks to them especially, may appear not misapplied.

You have, Gentlemen, it is impossible to conceal either from yourselves or others, been enriched by a system that has vastly augmented the population of our country. No one cause can be named, so prolific, of our present state in this particular, as that of the wealth you have been enabled to accumulate. And may God's blessing and grace attend you in this momentous stewardship you are invested with, by the bounty of an over-ruling Providence! If, therefore, your own hearts echo in assured and reposing

^{*} Pray do not forget, that I am quoting here from a beautiful Article of your own Church: viz. the 27th, on Baptism.

confidence to this prayer; if ye are, as after having dismissed the above exception I am here venturing to assume you are, all members of the Church of England, then let me entreat you to weigh well your responsibilities, as to providing means of worship for those of whom you may be said in a certain sense to be actually the parents, in the religious communion ye yourselves belong to. What if I should go farther and disclose to you my reflecting opinion that ye, more than any class of persons in these realms, have been (willingly or wilfully I am far from saying: but actually) the occasions of the vast progress of Dissent? If ye can once bring your minds to a conviction that Dissent is at least a social evil, whatever its supposed religious necessity may be, will not these responsibilities present themselves to your minds in a two-fold light? that is, first in the light of releasing such of your dependants as set a value on religion, from the predicament of being necessarily Dissenters; and secondly, in that of enabling them to be churchmen? In either or both of these views, the duty resulting is one that I have too high an opinion of your judgment, not unaccompanied with a hope that your religious charity is proportionate, to be induced to add another

All that remains then on the present head, is to say a few words especially to the Agricultural Nobility and Gentry; and to close with an important piece of information, alike applicable to all addressed. It probably happens to many of you to have property, more or less, in those places which have not Church-room adequate to their population. In these, either singly or collectively, "be merciful after your power." Place the Church of England within reach of your tenantry. With a becoming effort of generosity, step forward to shew your zeal in providing

religious worship, where needed, under the Establishment, and there need be no fears for the result.

It may be fit to add here, that with regard to the support of Ministers for such new Churches or Chapels as yet remain to be built, where no resources can be obtained from pew rents; or in aid of such, where they are insufficient; after a small original endowment, farther Augmentations are capable of being resorted to, through the admirable Bounty given by Her Majesty Queen Anne, after a manner which I have taken the liberty of suggesting in a former Publication.* And so I conclude the present topic.

Upon the second+ head of my remarks, if I have been at all successful in pointing out both the fact of the diminished influence of the Clergy, and likewise its mischievous consequences; I am well persuaded it can be made appear, that the remedy of this evil lies, under Providence, very mainly with you. Indeed it is not easy to estimate or describe the beneficial position in which you stand to the community at large in this respect.

To take the several branches of this topic in the order in which they have been handled before, (abstaining however,

^{*} Case between the Church and the Dissenters, p. 161.

[†] The necessity of an explanatory remark has been suggested, which ought to have appeared in an earlier purt of this pamphlet; viz. at page 5: but that part had gone to the press, before the suggestion reached me. It is this. It having been stated to me, in connection with the second head, both by Clergy for themselves, and by Laity for them, that their influence is neither felt or seen to be diminished: personally, I rejoice to reply, I believe the remark to be, in a vast majority of cases, thoroughly true and just. But publickly and professionally, three unquestionable sources of diminished influence to them exist in our days almost universally.—First, a vast accession of modern combinations disparaging to their ministry, in the shape of new Conventicles and their numerous adherents: Secondly, as a sure consequence, a growing unconcern for the special position of the National Clergy: and Thirdly, as in part the effect of the preceding two, but not a little growing out of the spirit of the times also, the breaking down of the barrier that formerly distinguished the religious disciple from the master.

for obvious reasons, from farther allusion to the first); with regard to parish vestries, ye have it greatly in your power, whether by personal presence, by influencing* your tenants, or by the general tone of intercourse with your neighbours, to restore to the parochial Clergyman that weight and influence in vestry, which in modern times, I am not afraid to say, never exists without the accompaniment, in nine cases out of ten, of public benefit. It is owing to the prevailing absence of this influence, that its real value is not known and felt. You have only, I am sure, to exercise your calm, reflecting judgment, on the value of an individual presiding at a vestry, possessed of the various qualifications in part already described, and in part such as will readily present themselves to your minds; to be convinced, not only that such presidency is of very high value, but that without it, it is even difficult to imagine how parish business can properly and adequately go on: how, that is, amidst the difficulties in the case of disbursements, anything like a just balance can be preserved between indiscriminating profusion on the one hand, and grinding parsimony on the other:-how the various parties interested in parish deliberations, can have their respective interests weighed and softened into common agreement; or how the nice points of parish investigation can be decided with desirable accuracy, strictness, and impartiality. I am not saying, that business of this sort may not be transacted ill, as it is possibly every week, without the Clergyman; but I am affirming the improbability of its being done well. And as to the Clergyman's abusing the influence he should possess in vestry; so numerous are the counterpoises to this, that under the most Utopian degree of supposed practical perfection in this

^{*} It surely cannot be necessary for me to add, that the influence referred to here is moral and persuasive only.

respect, the wonder will ever be, rather that the Clergy in general should muster courage to take their posts in vestry; than that they should be permitted to abuse whatever sway or influence they may possess, or acquire there. In truth, it is with the somewhat hopeless aim of animating them generally to this courage, that your influence may, and might ever be, most beneficially exercised.

With regard to the temporal Rights of the Clergy, your remedial powers are, indeed, beyond estimate. It is from you, I fear, mainly that the evil has originated: (the last quarter indeed, from whence we could have expected it, for the Clergy and those now addressed are natural allies,) and in your case, I believe broached without all the reflection the case required, and you could have given it: but still, from you, I fear, it has arisen. With regard to jealousy concerning the nature and footing of our rights, or any imaginable wish on your parts, or that of the rest of the Laity, to see them transferred; I had rather abstain from making any farther allusion, for the sake of referring you to a modern publication, named below,* which, I am pretty clear, your sober judgment would, on perusal, pronounce unanswerable. In case, however, those remarks should not meet your eye; I will simply add one general aim of them: viz. that of shewing how the Nation would in no way be gainers from a transfer of Church Property: and that whatever considerations strip the Church of its Property, will leave you free from any distinction in favour of your's. It is more than probable indeed, that either, or both these truths have long ago presented themselves to your judgment; and it is due to the valuable writer here referred to, to interpose the information; that his address,

^{*} Six Letters to the Farmers of England, on Tithes and Church Property. Roake & Varty, 31, Strand. Price, One Shilling and Sixpence.

however valuable, is not to your rank in society, but to the Farmers. (Let me introduce in a parenthesis here, a brief remark: that with talent and investigation how inferior! I have yet been moved to frame my address to the higher class of the two! I pass on).—But it is to far more generous parts of your nature that I wish to make my appeal, in the following words:-Have any of you a desire to undo what has been done by your predecessors in some cases, by your lineal progenitors in others, in the way of Religious Endowments? Rather, if we search heart-deep, can ye quite suppress the rising emotion of righteous indignation, at the unjust encroachments on those endowments, which one memorable Reign produced? But, to quit this last subject in an instant, let me return to the former one, and say: Do you, as a body, wish to see the Clergy, as a body, stript of their Tithes? or the Ecclesiastical Governors or Bodies, of their Properties, whence-soever accruing? Still closer to confine my present expostulation to the Tithes; can you honestly wish to see the owners of them deprived of their just and real value ?* If not, surely we have a fair right

^{*} It is painful to have observed two modern instances of Laymen (one the Lord High Chancellor of England, the other the Secretary for Ireland,) speaking in their respective places, in their respective Houses of Parliament. disparagingly and disrespectfully of the abstract nature of Tithe Property. I must differ from them in toto. An opinion I once expressed to a distinguished churchman, I have never seen reason to abandon. Tithes I consider a standing miracle, in the following particular. Since their first institution, I am not aware of any state of society to which they have not from time to time been found capable of being adapted: as long, that is, and as far as the Religious Teachers entitled to them deserve and receive the respect due to their office. Whereas, on the other hand, I remember no one Legislative substitute for them, which has not been more or less visibly stamped with the comparatively puny marks of the feebleness and shortsightedness of human wisdom.-The remark of the Earl of Wicklow was at once more constitutional and, in the christian sense of the word, more patriotic, when in his place also, he "maintained that tithe was no grievance." -See his Lordship's Speech in the House of Lords, Friday, February 17th, 1832: as reported in The Albion of February 18th.

to hope from the generous impulses reasonably to be assumed as acting on men in the station you fill: that ye will not set an example of discountenancing, rather that ye will take every suitable occasion for respectfully admitting, the just claims of every clerical owner of tithes to his fair compensation for this species of property: and that you will be the last to calumniate any investigation into their value on the part of their possessors, such as ye yourselves are accustomed to adopt in the case of your own property. And this is all we can or do ask of you to do in the sphere in society in which you are destined by Providence to move.

In the department of ministerial usefulness more strictly professional, it is again not easy to describe how much strength it is in your power to render to the local exertions of the Clergy, as will appear under the next head of consideration, as well as the present: and the difficulty of describing it is farther increased by the rarity of cases, in which the attempt is made. Yet, when it is made, seldom, if ever, can it fail of being effectual. Alas! without want of faith, as I hope, the Clergyman too often feels how (comparatively, at least) weak and powerless are addresses to the mere spiritual man! The temporal man wants to be relieved, before the eyes and ears of the spiritual man can be effectually opened. To the Clergyman it is one of the most painful departments of his office to witness how often this is the case: and to discover also, that even when the spirit is called forth, owing to the current of the times, enthusiasm too often occupies the place of sober, relying, teachable faith. Yet, throwing this latter case aside, temporal aid is wanted to give influence to the lessons of the spiritual monitor. And how rarely is the parochial Clergyman in a condition to scatter this relief over any mentionable proportion of his parish from his own resources! Here, therefore, the resident Nobility and Gentry can and may step in: and all that is respectfully asked of them is, to associate these their alms-deeds with regard to the office and spiritual influence of the lawful pastor.

Again: it is far from being the whole truth, that it is in the walk of temporal charity only that the Nobility and Gentry can strengthen the hands of the parochial Clergyman, so as through him to uphold and extend the influence of religion and virtue, as cherished and enforced by the Church to which they belong. No. In the far more momentous concerns of the soul, either in their own persons, or through those valuable "helpers" to the cause of Christianity, the females of their family, they can become the instruments of ministering abundantly to the spiritual consolations of the sick; the hopes and fears of the dying; the sorrows of the afflicted; the humiliations of the penitent. Through the provisions of the excellent Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, which is the only channel for distribution of written religious instruction I can publickly recommend for resort, believing it to be of itself largely competent for its object; they have means of placing in the hands of their poor Cottagers sure and safe modes of renewing, under God, the old man in righteousness and true One only caution I will venture to add: that these spiritual exertions should be uniformly made with an eye never turned away from the special functions of the parish Clergyman, the commissioned messenger of God. With this remark I conclude all I have to offer in the way of remedy under the second head.

Upon the remedial processes belonging to the third and only remaining topic, all the difficulty felt in connection with those addressed, is that of knowing where to stop. For the field here entered on is, without exaggeration, boundless. The evil complained of is illimitably multiform, and the remedies happily not less inexhaustible. To them let me respectfully proceed.

In the first place, may I with unfeigned deference take up the language of respectful exhortation, and say: It will befit those addressed to set an example in their own persons of the opposite to sciolism, especially in religion? It will befit such as fill this station in society, to shew that they both think and know of the things that belong unto their salvation, in order that others may walk by the light of their example. Above all, and as the least degree of opposite to the evil here denounced, it befits them to set an example in religion of going, where they do not know, to those who do: of resorting reverently for instruction, where they find they need it, to those who ought to be both able and willing to impart it. This last sentence treads indeed somewhat closely on the topic just dismissed; but in the present connection, and perhaps not altogether as an unsuitable link between the two, it well deserves this brief repetition. Let it be alike engraven on the hearts, and shewn forth in the practice, both of pastors and the distinguished classes now addressed, that "the Priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts."* Forgive me, Sirs, but is it anything more or less than a bonus on, and incentive to, the ignorance of your Clergy, if ye sparingly resort to them for the knowledge they are specially commissioned to convey? Was it for nought that your distinguished ancestors and predecessors obtained for themselves, as well as for others, by a sacrifice of a portion of their worldly goods, guides and patterns for the good of their souls? Yet of what use is the vessel, if it be seldom

^{*} Malachi ii. 7.

or never to pour forth its contents? What dust and rust must it contract, if it be never or rarely resorted to for use! since I am sure ye cannot need assurance, that in the present days, at least, the vessel cannot move with any advantage from its resting place, unless there be channels meeting it, ready to receive and imbibe its contents? It should seem, as if a livelier image could not readily have been presented to your mind's eye than the one here chosen. But let me go yet farther, and add: If the treasury from the priest's lips is perfunctorily resorted to; if half an hour in a week is enough, and these are the only occasions in which the exercise of his special functions is sought after; this is a very scanty use of the appointed vessel, and the next world stands at a very distant point in the scale of interest and affection, from the present. Pray, however, believe me, whilst I add, that in our days even this weekly punctual attendance on public religious instruction from you is of the highest importance to the Christian cause, in the way of example, as respects others, in common with vourselves.

Resort to the religious teacher on your part then, seems a step of the highest moment towards the removal of religious sciolism: and the more of it there is in reason, the better will the remedy apply. But what, as to the choice of your religious teacher? Who is he to be? Thanks be to God! amidst the host of adversaries which the Church of England has to encounter, a vast preponderance in numbers of the class now addressed select for their religious teacher the parish Clergyman. And with all respect, Sirs, let me congratulate you on your choice. I should be ashamed of doing so indeed, if I could suppose you for a moment capable of thinking that the language here used arises in any degree from the position in which I myself

stand.* I hope, if I were in the ranks of the Laity, I should be ready to do the same. Sure I am that many Laymen in our Church are ready to echo the sentiment. Let me, in my own vindication however, defend my position by contrasting this choice of your's with other possible ones within your reach.

First, will a popish teacher be preferable for you? Alas! he will lead you into the interminable labyrinth of what he calls unwritten verities, to which he will claim your assent and belief, as of things necessary to salvation. Will a dissenting teacher present grounds of preference? From him, I am not afraid to say, if you abide by his teaching, you will have to study a new Bible. + I am not careful as to which sect of Dissenters this remark is applied to; I hold it a just one to all, and am not afraid of maintaining it. So that if you are desirous of walking in the plain track of simple, scriptural truth, I scruple not to say your choice has been a happy one for the attainment of this end. Neither will it be the worse, but the better, if it has descended to you through the channel of hereditary duty, reverence, and affection; or comes still further recommended by respect and conformity to the laws of the land: provided all these ties are found in company and in unison with enlightened

^{*} I want support here, and must go for it to Bishop Jeremy Taylor, who reasons thus. "It is possible that both truth and interest may be conjoined; and when a Priest preaches to the people the necessity of paying Tithes, where they are by Law appointed; or when a poor man pleads for charity, or a man in debt urges the excellency of forgetfulness: the truth which they discourse of, cannot be prejudiced by their proper concernments."—Taylor's Ductor Dubitantuith, or Rule of Conscience, Book i. Chap. 1., Rule iii. Sect. 6.

[†] This position, strong as it is, stands or falls with the following opinion: that all grounds of Dissent from the English Church are not of sufficient weight, to consist with obedience to the first of the three Texts quoted at page 39. From the language of the Text it is obvious I hold myself prepared to defend this opinion.

reflection and well-founded faith, enabling you to "give a reason" for the choice you have made. After having slightly adverted to the claims of other teachers, however, there is not a little to be said farther in favour of your choice, which it perhaps befits the present design briefly to unfold.

You will have read in your Bible the following charge addressed by St. Paul to his disciple Timothy: "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."* I feel satisfied not a doubt crosses your mind of this being any other, than a precise designation of the nature of the ministerial office: and as it involves what is always of great consequence in all arguments such as the present, the distinct principle of succession ("men able to teach others" for the office for which St. Paul taught Timothy); you have here a distinct negociation of a successive body of "able," competent witnesses of God's word. Now, to go over again the three-fold classification already made of Popish, Dissenting, and Church of England teachers; amongst whom in these realms can you best hope to find the "able" witnesses? The Papist is not "able" to teach the Divine Word, the whole Word, and nothing but the Word, because the Church to which he is bound by ties of which none but those within them can fully understand the potency, forbids him to teach the Bible only as the Divine Word, as it is written, but adds Tradition to it The Dissenting teacher (absit invidia: I speak it also. "more in sorrow than in anger,") I hold to be not "able" to teach the Divine Word, as it is written; because before he begins his office, he has struck out three Texts at least from his Bible, which we of the Church of England find

^{*} II. Timothy ii. 2.

there, and retain, and act upon. "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." "With one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Let there be no divisions among you."* If then their system (perhaps except as regards division, it would more correctly be said, want of system) dis-"ables" them from teaching you these three Texts in the sense in which the inspired writers designed them, they are not "able" to teach others as St. Paul commanded those who follow Timothy to do. The Church of England teacher therefore, alike enjoined by his Church to teach nothing but the Bible for necessary truth; and the whole of it, as alike necessary; is the "able" witness remaining,—and him ye have chosen to guide you in the way of salvation.

To this ground of congratulation I will add just as much as may have reached your convictions of what has been said on Episcopacy at pages 14—17, adding only, to secure us from the Popish teacher, the necessary qualification, Episcopacy, teaching none for necessary truths, but such as the inspired written Word has revealed. Upon these two pillars, I trust, your choice may stand impregnable against all adversaries, who are content with confining themselves to the words of soberness and truth.

But there is a moral, or if you like it better, a social ground of congratulation for your choice, too important to be overlooked. The Established Clergy have every bias of every kind towards upholding the system, under which they exercise their ministry: as the Popish Clergy and Dissenting Teachers have the like bias towards upholding theirs. Now what are the two systems? The Church of England ministers teach under rules prescribed by the nation; the Popish Clergy teach what they learn from Rome; the

^{*} Ephesians iv. 3. Romans xv. 6. I. Corinthians i. 10.

Dissenting Ministers teach what their particular party espouse. Now, although the Church of Rome may (abstractedly, I say: not however as their doctrine of infallibility affirms, must) be right; and, abstractedly speaking also, one or more dissenting communities may be likewise, unless indeed where they teach contradictories, in which case, according to a received opinion in logic, both cannot be right; yet both Popish and Dissenting teachers have an interest in drawing away from things established: whilst the established Clergy have the same interest in drawing to them. I surely cannot be so far misunderstood here, as to be thought to mean, that this great question is to be governed by considerations of interest. But what I mean is, that as far as you wish to place confidence in the doctrines you are taught, you will, I doubt not, feel yourselves, as citizens, safer in the hands of those who espouse established things, than of those who aim to agitate, alter, and disturb. And I will go yet farther and say: That that is least likely to need alteration, and most likely to receive it when it does need, which is settled by national representatives; than that is, which before it can be acted on has to be fetched from Rome, or collected from the decisions of a Conference, or other whole or representative body, assuredly in neither case made up of the whole or greater part of the wisdom of the nation.

Upon these grounds then, the first of the utmost, the second of only inferior, and the third of very considerable moment, I trust you will see ample reason for not repenting of your choice; but rather closely adhering to it. Forgive me if I add, that in your influential post in society, (as influential it assuredly is;) provided the foregoing remarks are of any truth or value, a little more is sought of you than bare adherence to your choice: viz. to recommend

the same to others, who have either only made it nominally, or renounced it entirely. Here, Sirs, is where my great difficulty arises: here is where the question (to which I shall advert more at large presently) may be most suitably applied: Cui Bono? Here, in short, to speak plainly, are needed far higher powers of persuasion than I fear I can reach. Not because the object aimed at is unattainable: far from it: but because it is not very commonly attempted.

Thus however I proceed. If either your own previous reflection, or the foregoing remarks should have jointly or separately brought you to the opinion, not only that those are the happiest who are content to live and die in the communion of the Church of England; but also, that the more can be prevailed on to do so, the happier it will be both for themselves and the community of which they are individual members; then I may at once boldly put the question:—Have you a moment's doubt that you are placed in a position in society highly capable, under Providence, of becoming instrumental towards increasing this number, especially amongst the lower classes, if you will but be at the pains of trying it? Forgive me if I but slightly advert here to an objection with which the question may be stifled at its birth: viz. "Is not this the Clergy's business?" I answer respectfully, In the present state of society, without a miracle, the Clergy cannot do it alone. Now then, permit me to ask how far such language as the following, finds a response in your hearts and consciences, as suitable to be addressed to every absenting head of a family, or every family collectively, of those who come within the sphere of your influence?

"I am sorry I do not see you at church on Sundays. I am sorry to find that you are either absenters or dissenters. If you go no where, let me inform or remind you, as a

friend, that you have another world to live for besides the present; that in that world, God the reconciled Father in Christ Jesus will be the only friend you will have to look to; and God's own Word has given you full reason to be certain that you will never have Him for your friend in Heaven, if you obstinately and profanely, from week to week, refuse to worship Him in His courts on earth. If, therefore, you wish to get to Heaven when you die, do not allow yourselves a single week longer in the practice of staying away from all public worship on the Lord's Day, unless you have such a reason to offer for so doing, as you would not be afraid to lay before God Himself. If, on the other hand, you go commonly on Sundays to other places of religious assembly besides the church; let me request you to listen to me a little longer on this point: because here, inasmuch as your course is assuredly, to say the least of it, far safer than in the other case, it may need a little more pains to convince you of your mistake, if it be one. Listen to me then, whilst I say as shortly as I can, what I have to say on this matter. I dare affirm you have not had much time to read or think on this subject, and whatever opinions you have are probably received either from those who first advised you about it, or from the religious teacher you have made choice of. And even if you have read any books upon this subject, have you read any you can depend upon which tells you faithfully what the early christians did about divisions (that is, setting up separate parties) in the christian church, and about Bishops? I have not read a great deal on this myself: but the little I have, as well as what I have heard from those on whom I am not afraid to depend; * above all, what I have read

^{*} No private Christian can be blamed for placing considerable confidence in his religious teacher, provided such teacher has any decent pretensions

in my Bible,* convinces me that that the Apostles both condemned 'divisions,' and recommended what we now call 'Bishops.'+ At any rate, they strongly condemn 'divisions,' and breaking off into parties. And you yourself must be aware that these are bad things, and to be avoided, if possible. It would be much better if we could all worship together, and believe and speak 'the same thing.' So that, unless you have some far better reasons for separating from the church than any I have yet heard of, I believe you are doing this without half, or rather one tenth of the knowledge and reflection which such a subject requires. Pray, therefore, let me as a neighbour, advise you to think of these things. It will do you no harm to turn them over and over again, and to consider whether you had not better come back again to the church. If you see good reason to come back, I shall rejoice for your sake and my own: because it will be pleasant to both of us to 'walk in the house of God as friends."

Now, my Lords and Gentlemen, let me entreat your reflecting attention to the language I have thus ventured to place on your lips. It may, in many points, not be the language either of your hearts, or your minds: of your affections, that is, or your judgment. Indeed I hope I am far from being so arrogant as to say, they have throughout an undoubted claim to your assent. On the other hand, I will not suppress my respectful opinion, that there is a good deal of it you may be reasonably hoped to admit into

to the name. But I believe the Church of England Laity in particular have no reason for diminished confidence in their's.

^{*} Romans xvi. 17. 1. Corinthians i. 10. and xi. 18; and the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

⁺ To avoid misconception, it is fit that I should define here the sense in which I use the word Bishops:—viz. Individuals, ordaining in, and spiritually presiding over a limited District, whether containing one or more Congregations.

your convictions: and if so, then to introduce into your practical judgment. Should it be thus, a large portion of my present design is answered.—Again, on some points on which you have remaining doubt; there may be those in your number who may have both leisure and disposition to investigate, and so either have their doubts removed, or the fallacy of the advice made clear. On the other hand, should your unwillingness to adopt the above language arise from want of acquaintance with some of the subjects adverted to, may I in very few words say, Here may be something like sciolism, that on so high and influential a subject might well have "an order of removal?"

Might I adopt this assumption, I am sure you will excuse my freedom in saying a few words in recommendation of the following course of enquiry. In the first place, I would suggest the opening your enquiry with the perusal of the three following texts, from the places in which you will find them in the Holy Book. "Endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." "I (Paul) beseech you, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you." "Mark them which cause divisions, and avoid them."* Let these be your polar star. Then read attentively throughout the Epistles to Timothy and Titus; paying particular attention to the verse in the Epistle to latter, which says: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city: + as the model of one person set over many cities, both to govern and to ordain. you can afford time, or have inclination for farther enquiry, and farther search into antiquity; (in which case I venture to suggest the earliest after the Apostles, as sufficient,)

^{*} Ephesians iv. 3. I. Corinthians i. 10. Romans xvi. 17. + Titus i. 5.

peruse either in their original, or in Archbishop Wake's translation, the Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, and Ignatius's seven Epistles. Still farther, should you wish to see what effect investigations of this sort had in times nearer our own on the mind of a very good churchman and elevated Layman, quite independently of the view you take for or against him as a statesman; in the Papers between King Charles the First, and Mr. Charles Henderson, and between the same King, and the Divines at Newport;* to which may be added what I scruple not to call the work of the same King, the Icon Basilike; you will find abundant proofs of sound information collected with judgment, from the authorities I have named; at the same time that you will have held up to your interest, and perhaps imitation, what may be safely termed a model to such of the Church of England Laity as may wish to dig a little below the surface for the foundations of our English Church. Having done this, either the conclusions come to from these documents, as expressed in the foregoing pages, are fallacious; (conclusions however, I rejoice to say, similar to those our own Church has arrived at on like grounds;) or you can have no reason to fear your being strictly within the limits of truth; if you think proper to address your poorer neighbours in the tone of admonition I have ventured to place on your lips, hoping it may have come thither through your minds, from your hearts.

^{*} BAYIAIKA, the Works of King Charles the Martyr.

[†] A new Edition of this Work was published in 1824, and is still to be had. Another also is quite lately come out, the profits of which, I am told, are to be applied to the relief of a Clergyman's Widow.

[‡] Preface to Ordination Services.—" It is evident unto all men, diligently reading holy Scripture and Ancient authors, that from the Apostles time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church; Bishops, Priests, and Deacons."

If then, Sirs, there is any truth in the foregoing remarks, we have surely reached a very high point in our argument. For not only has it been made appear that a great deal of sciolism in religion prevails amongst the lower classes, to whom, for the purposes of this appeal the enquiry has mainly been confined; but also, that you have very copious practical means of diminishing, though not wholly dispersing it. All that is in your power however, has not been advanced. I crave permission to go on.

If the occasional intercourse of some portion of your families with the classes below and around them, is such as appears to me important and desirable it should be, there is one ample remedy against religious sciolism open to them: viz. that of applying such influence as they possess, towards regulating the written means of religious knowledge put into their hands: in other words, their choice of religious books-a subject that has never received a tenth part of the attention due to it. Whether any portion of your families may possess, or be induced to take steps towards attaining this influence, is not for me to say; but I cannot conceal my hopeful anticipations on this point: let the experiment but be fairly tried. And supposing it successful, there is happily a channel already mentioned, to which as churchmen ye may resort without the slightest apprehension of danger, and with the most reasonable confidence of success: I mean the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge:out of which I confess I see no need for imparting any religious instruction to the poor. When I say as churchmen, what I mean is, that since churchmanship, if it means anything, involves approbation of, and concurrence in, the principles of interpretation of scripture adopted by that church; it may be reasonably presumed, that you will be ready to place confidence in a society supported unanimously

by the spiritual Governors of that Church, as well as the general concurrence of the Clergy; and having its choice of books regulated by general meetings composed of Bishops, some of the best and wisest Pastors, and the most zealous, active, and considerate Laymen of that Church. But let me go a little farther into details on this subject. By this society the Bible is circulated, in which you must rejoice as Christians; the Common Prayer Book and Church Homilies are distributed, in which you must concur, as churchmen. The only remaining material for dispersion is Tracts. Here is a field both for Clerical and Lay exertion. Yet I have not to learn, that amongst both ranks, there is not entire unanimity amongst such as interest and bestir themselves in such matters. There are those, both Clergy and Laity, within the bosom of our own Church, who would not concur in what has been here said, as to exclusive adherence to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, for the issue of religious publications. So far from it, they think many Tracts, either coming forth from individuals without the sanction of any Society, or Tracts issued by other Societies, preferable to many of the Society already named. I will not entangle this appeal by splitting straws on this question. It is more perhaps as a sop to the indolence (should there be any), or at least for the sake of saving the time of those now written to, that I have proposed this line in the way of safe-guard. Still, I am not expecting the suggested limit to be strictly observed. One thing only however I will say: that whilst from a circulation confined to the shelves of the Christian Knowledge Society I can anticipate, as a Clergyman and a Churchman, no possible danger: with regard to Tracts distributed from other sources, a general caution seems to me necessary: viz. that without previous inspection of Tracts distributed

more injury may be, and often is done to Christianity, as held and professed by the Church of England, than by very many attacks that might be named, of open hostility.

In the negative department, however, of this subject; that of succeeding in either suppressing or displacing mischievous publications, calling themselves "religious;" a very considerable branch of religious benevolence presents itself: and one perhaps of hardly, if at all, inferior value to the positive act of distributing good ones. For I believe it to be an actual truth, that the knowledge (falsely so called) imparted by some of these books, is worse than nothing: and not less a truth, that the good done by good books of this kind may be actually more than counterbalanced by the evil of bad ones. With this cogent remark (for such I trust it will appear to be) I am resolved so far to draw in my sails, as to close this in reality interminable topic of the remedies against religious sciolism.

And yet, as my pen ran over the last line, one sentiment has presented itself, without which I cannot close. It is this. As a Churchman and a Clergyman, but still more as a peace-and-unity-loving christian, I rejoice, my Lords and Gentlemen, in the support many of you have been induced to give to the affiliation in our county of the Incorporated National Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church. That your numbers do not indeed swell that list so largely as might be hoped, and is to be desired, cannot be denied. Yet for the support it has received from you, all love, all glory, be to God! The institution is, I doubt not, if its effects are carried on to after life, the best possible instrument that human wisdom, trusting to the aid of Divine Providence, can rely on, for checking amongst the labouring classes the growth and progress of religious sciolism.

As I draw to my conclusion, my heart fails me. For now it is I have to answer explicitly and fully the question put to me by a valuable friend in the very outset of this undertaking: Cui Bono? I am inspirited however by the question, and if in my zeal to do myself what justice I can in answering it, I am roused to a somewhat livelier tone of expostulation than has belonged to the foregoing observations; I hope that even here the respect which is so deeply seated in my breast for those now addressed, and whose good-will it is so important to my ultimate object to conciliate, will not forsake me. My own amour propre indeed is roused, but not, I trust, at the expence of your's.

Cui Bono? Let me answer thus. If the Church of England be what it has been here stated to be; if its Communion has in modern times been largely deserted, from the operation of the causes already dilated on; then two questions remain to be answered.

First: Have the Nobility and Gentry of England generally, or of our own county particularly, done all they might or could to stem the evil, or apply the remedy?

Secondly: Does much yet remain in their power in both these respects?

If the first of these questions be capable of a negative, and the second of an affirmative answer, then there is a Cui Bono? and one worth seeking for. Permit me respectfully to pursue the search.

When the question was put to me for the second time over the early pages of the manuscript, my answer was short and quick: Why, that in another year three new Churches or Chapels may be begun in Leicestershire; the Subscribers to all or most of our Voluntary Church Societies, especially those most in need, nearly or quite doubled; the influence of the parochial Clergy in Vestry settled on

more reflecting principles; the attendance in our Village Churches more especially, gradually, but perceptibly increased; and the moral and spiritual influence of the Church, on its own principles, largely extended. Allow me to take these as the heads of what I shall say: however the sober level of practical computation may be below that of the ardent, and possibly somewhat too ready assumption, of eager, prospective anticipation.

1. New Churches or Chapels. If three or more are palpably wanted through the county, and there are individuals ready to embark in efforts towards supplying the need, either beginning from, or acting with the local Clergy in each case; can it be questioned, that an appeal to such of the class here addressed as either have property in the places where this need prevails, or have no such need in the parishes where they have property; might between them produce, without any very large pecuniary sacrifice, the portion of aid to be reasonably sought for from such quarters? I say, to be reasonably sought for: because there is one point of view in which this subject may be treated, that has not yet been handled; at the same time that it seems properly reserved to this place, where the practical end has to be grasped and grappled with.

The original history of Building and Endowing Parish Churches ought not to be forgotten. It is thus briefly and correctly stated in a modern Publication already adverted to.* "The real truth is this: when Christianity was first brought into England, and the Christians were few, and the country thinly inhabited, a Bishop had a certain number of Clergy living with him. He travelled about himself, and sent these Clergy, &c.—But after a time the owners of great estates were not satisfied with having a short visit

^{*} Six Letters to the Farmers of England, p. 9, 10.

from a Clergyman now and then; they wished to have a Clergyman living among them, to teach and advise their followers and tenants, as well as themselves. So they applied to the Bishop, and made a bargain of this sort with him: that if he would settle one of his Clergy on their estates, they would build a church and settle the Tithe of the produce of their lands on the Clergyman. This was done very generally, and each estate became what is now called a parish. The various kings in the Saxon times did the same as the noblemen. This became general at last, or nearly so, through the whole country. So the Tithes were the free gift of the owners of estates to the Clergy, and the law or the Government had nothing to do with it."-Now, permit me, my Lords and Gentlemen, in connection with these extracts, to say: If the Church of England be as deserving of support, especially from its own members, as the foregoing pages would aim to prove; affluent churchmen of the present generation appear placed in a position strongly analogous, at least, to that just described. other words, if they wish to obtain Church of England worship for their tenantry, or for the bulk of the people in their own district generally, the modern state of things suggests that new Churches, and Church of England Chapels, must be built and endowed. But for this, Heathenism indeed, in the strict sense, probably may not creep in: but either Dissent or Irreligion infallibly must. Without at all bringing into comparison the two states of things, where Gentilism was in one case, and Dissent is in the other, the rival for support; it is quite sufficient to observe, that in order to the Church of England being thrown open to the bulk of the Nation, it can only be, and therefore it is to be hoped will be, by the help at least of support from such

- quarters.* If three Churches or Chapels are erected now in this way, where wanted; and the same number, if still required, at an interval of five years hence; it is not improbable that the present generation in Leicestershire may actually have contributed their reasonable quota to the need.+
- 2. The Voluntary Church Societies. Here it is my firm belief the County of Leicester has done as well as most, if not all, counties in England, in proportion to its size, wealth, and numbers. And yet, to shew how little this comparatively "much" is, I am sure I shall not be giving offence,
- * The following exemplification of the support capable of being afforded from the quarters alluded to above, will, I doubt not, be allowed to have a proper place here. From one house in this county, within the last ten years, Two Hundred Guineas have been given by its (then) Owner, towards the erection and endowment of a Chapel of Ease in a parish where he was by no means the principal proprietor; and Four Hundred Pounds has been since bequeathed by his Widow, towards building a Parsonage House for the same district: which, under the judicious and admirable regulations of the Queen Anne's Bounty Board, has been farther increased to £800. Common justice impels me to add, that these two persons being departed, the mantle of Christian and Church-of-England beneficence has descended on their successors. May they long wear it!
- † The following Note (p. 14) to a Charge of Archdeacon Burnaby's, delivered at Leicester, and printed in 1797, having lately fallen in my way, is so appropriate to my present subject, that I am tempted to subjoin it here. "Within our own memory the new Church at Norton, and the tower and body of the Church at Gaulby, both built by the late W. Forterey, Esq.; the Churches at Stapleford and Saxby, built by the present Earl of Harborough; the spire of Ratcliffe upon the Wreke, erected by the present Earl Ferrers," &c. &c.—The still more modern instances of erection and extensive repairs and enlargement that have occurred within my knowledge are St. George's Chapel and St. Nicholas' Church, Leicester; St. George's Chapel, Whitwick; the Church of Cole Orton entirely fitted up internally, and very considerably repaired externally; the Church of Ashby-de-la-Zouch wholly re-pewed; and though last, not least, the handsome interior, wholly new, and very mainly effected by individual bounty, of Appleby, in the Deanery of Sparkenhoe. All these, excepting Cole Orton, Ashby, and Appleby, having been chiefly the result of public bounty, will be found farther alluded to in the next page.

but only throwing what light is almost needful for my subject, if I present my readers with the following tabular statement of the present result.

statement of the present result.
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Society for Promoting Christian
Knowledge
Incorporated Society for the
Propagation of the Gospel in
Foreign Parts.* 75 0 0
Incorporated National Society for
the Education of the Poor in the
Principles of the Established
Church.+
Incorporated Society for Promot-
ing the Enlargement, Building,
and Repairing of Churches and
Chapels 0
St. George's Chapel, Leicester, 1
 Amount of Subscriptions, £1944. 7s. Subscribers under Ten Guineas not included in this number, their Names not having been supplied. Amount of Subscriptions, about £1100. Amount of Subscriptions, exactly £570, besides the Benefaction of £100 from His Majesty, as Duke of Lancaster.—Site Fund, £127. 13s.
Incorporated Society for Clothing,
Maintaining, and Educating,

Poor Orphans of Clergymen of

^{*} It is hoped that this Society, both in the Metropolis and the Country, will henceforth receive more extended support: support more worthy of the Church it represents, the magnitude of its aims, and the judgment and piety with which it is found to administer the Funds placed at its disposal.

[†] The general object of this Society is most materially, and in this County I doubt not extensively, advanced by local Contributions to Parochial Church of England Schools. For the purposes of this Table, it is to be lamented that the extent of these Contributions cannot be ascertained; but it may be safely computed at a large amount: doubtless, Hundreds: possibly, Thousands.

Parent Society	Parent and	District
only.	District.	only.

the Established Church:* and Local Archdeaconry and County,+or Deanery, Establishments

or branches of the same obj	ect.	• •		3			7	•	•	0
Sub	bscribers.		scribers. Donati		natio	ns.	Subscriptions		ons.	
Archdeaconry and County	74							10		
Framland and Goscote Deaneries	3 3		0	0	0		34	2	6	
Gartree Deanery	32		0	0	0		36	4	6	
Sparkenhoe Deanery	38		0	0	0	••	40	16	0	
		£	989	6	0	£	181	13	6	

In laying this result before yourselves and the public, which, I doubt not, will present to your minds but a scanty quantum of eleemosynary aid from a large and affluent body, to the church of which they are members; I will at once bring forward negatively what I believe not to be, and positively what I believe to be, the causes of so scanty a List: which however, such as it is, is, I again repeat my belief, better than almost any other County of equal size and population can produce. I believe the causes not to be decided parsimony towards the Church, abstract parsimony, or unwillingness to act either singly or jointly in the cause

^{*} Access could not be conveniently obtained to the Reports between 1925 and 1831: but there is no reason for supposing that the accession in that interval can be calculated at *more* than the proportion of that interval to 24 years, i. e. one fourth more.

[†] It is much to be lamented, that the several Deaneries and Hundreds within the limits of this Archdeaconry and County have not been able to satisfy themselves as to the general expediency and benefit of concentrating their future exertions, quite irrespectively of existing Funds, to one point: viz. the newly-established, but I am happy to observe progressive, Institution for this object in the County Town: whereby an annual disposable Fund of £181. 13s. 6d. would become available to the whole County, (the Disbursements to each Deanery, if thought proper, to be made proportionate for a limited number of years to the Subscriptions,) instead of the same being scattered into so many sub-divisions. Already, it is gratifying to observe that the amount of Subscriptions to the Archdeaconry, or County Institution, nearly doubles that of any Deanery.

of public charity. The causes I believe to be either ignorance of the need, indifference to it, or a want of reflection as to how much may be done both individually and collectively in this great cause. Having said thus much, so persuaded am I of the general non-existence of what I call the non-causes as moving principles with you, (your support of temporal charities negatives the two last, and your decided preference for the Church goes a good way to negative the first, as far as voluntary support goes,) that I am driven to those I have stated affirmatively, so as to be induced to propose them as the sole causes. The grounds for lamentation suggested by these causes will be best unfolded under another head. Be these but removed, and my prophecy will be accomplished. The foregoing Table in its most important columns will be doubled.

3. Parish Vestries. If once the class here addressed should be prevailed on to see and admit the evil as it has been stated, and the remedies respectfully advanced, (upon which, if I am wrong in either, ready I trust I shall be found both to see and own my error,) I am persuaded that confident reliance may be reposed on their generosity for the application. They will do what they can to strengthen the legitimate influence of the parochial Clergy in vestry. The only point of doubt remaining as to the class addressed, is the amount of their influence in this point. And here a very interesting, satisfactory result may be gathered. For in a very large number of parishes in our county, the class addressed will be found to have considerable property, and, no doubt, proportionate influence. How then is it asked of them to exert this influence? By appeals to the common sense, I would almost say to the interest, of any or every leading occupier in the parish, as to how much it is for the common benefit both of rate-payers and rate-receivers

that the Clergyman's presence in vestry should be encouraged, and his tone of suggestion not too hastily dismissed. On this point I feel that quite enough has been said. Yet this present topic shall not be closed without a passing remark; that by a singular coincidence it happened to me to write this portion of my manuscript in a parish immediately adjoining, with which I am professionally connected, after my return from a large and numerous vestry held in that parish for an important secular object, in which the presiding Clergyman's remarks met with full as much attention, deference, and respect, as they deserved. That benefit may, or rather will accrue to the parish (possibly for generations to come,) from the tone and temper of that meeting, should it be persevered in, I have not the slightest doubt. Meanwhile, the circumstances of that parish so strikingly illustrate the practical benefit of a resident Clergyman under somewhat unusual circumstances, that I trust it may be excused me, if I do not forbear from stating them briefly and summarily in a Note.*

^{*} Till within the last twelve years, the parish for a long interval before had no resident Clergyman. Since that time, when the Vicarage House began to be occupied by a Clerical resident (the Incumbent himself living three miles off), two National Schools for Boys, and one for Girls, have been erected and kept up in the parish; a Select Vestry for the main township of the parish has been established; two Parochial Libraries instituted; a Chapel of Ease built, endowed, and augmented; a second Parsonage House in another populous district of the parish begun. And as in the principal township where the Vicarage House is situate, the wealth and resources of the place are manifestly increased during this space of time; so in the other district about to receive a resident Clergyman, from present appearances no doubt is to be entertained, but that in twelve years more a future reporter may produce from the Chapel district a parallel to that of the Mother Church. -To advert to other points. The net annual profits of the Living (without going into its precise amount,) having for many years been considerably under Two Hundred Pounds, two Dwelling Houses have been built within the period specified, for Tenants of the Glebe, at different points of it. This is not mentioned in the light of a sacrifice on the part of the present Incumbent; as the possibility and probability are, that both his interest and that

- 4. Attendance in our Village Churches more especially, gradually and perceptibly increased. I make this distinction, because in Towns the proportion of public places of worship to the population seldom or ever exceeding that of the number frequenting them; in these the Churches as well as other places of religious concourse, rarely fail of being filled. In Village Churches, on the other hand, empty pews or benches are too often seen. The portion of population which leaves these seats thus desolate, must be one of two classes: either Absenters or Dissenters: either going to no place of worship at all, or resorting to other places than the Church. With the first of these two classes I entertain a strong persuasion, that you might exercise a very important influence in the manner already stated, towards strengthening the hands of the Clergyman: and to the second class I scruple not to say, you would render an essential service, in vital connection with the concerns of their souls, if finding them entirely ignorant of any solid grounds on which they are proceeding, you could invite them to a closer insight and reflection into what they are about. Should you succeed in prevailing on them to do this, not the smallest doubt can be entertained that a vast increase of adhesion to the Church will be produced, and the only remaining benefit to be stated, effectually conferred: viz. that of
- 5. The moral and spiritual influence of the Church, on its own principles, largely extended. I say on its own principles: because even if ardent piety be extended by our

of his successors may be advanced by it: but it is mentioned as what may be done even where there is a Non-resident and a Pluralist—a Pluralist under £450 per annum. To sum up this statement, the Incumbent, by the valuable pecuniary and other aid of the Curate, has allotted ten Cottage Gardens in one part of the parish, and fourteen in another, to which others are about to be added; and the Lay Impropriator has followed the example on a larger and more liberal scale.

own members not in the Church's own way, the Church we belong to will obviously be not done full justice to. Nothing but the rampant growth of sectarianism, from its prolific root, sciolism, could have concealed the beauties that adorn our Apostolical Church. But it is not the least of the evils which Dissent has done to that Church, that from alienating the affections of so many, it has rendered it far more difficult for the Church of England, and above all, for it in conjunction with its valuable protectress and ally, the State, to put forth its full strength. The zeal which, unimpeded, might have produced considerable effects; has had either to expend itself in the encounter with, or to be wholly stifled by, counteracting and conflicting efforts. It is not meant to be denied here, that Dissent may have its share of useful influence in keeping up energies that might otherwise become dormant. But on the other hand, it has served to enfeeble many a pious attempt in the Church, especially where the individual prepared to make it is influenced by a conscientious impression that if he cannot effect his object on the solid grounds and firm principles of the Church of England, he had rather not run the risk of embarking in it at all. It is wide of my present purpose either to defend or censure this tone of feeling, or principle of action: it is sufficient to affirm my belief that such feeling and principle exists: and I will even add in my own person, that there are measures of religious benevolence I should long before this have embarked in within my own sphere of action, but that I felt it to be working too much up-stream, for either my strength or means of influence. This is enough for the important qualification introduced at the opening of this section.

The topic now introduced is so important and comprehensive, that I must be excused if I am a little diffuse on

it, and if, in fact, I comprehend the whole winding up of my argument under it.—I will commence my operation with the unwelcome communication of my opinion (as far as it is of any truth or value) that the Church of England is in one respect the very weakest of all religious Communions in these realms: viz. that of the mutual relation of Clergy and Laity, to each other. In the Dissenting Communities I believe this is managed in one of three ways: either by the Minister's being more or less as the creature,* so the dependent, of his flock; or by his feeding, if not humouring certain feelings and inward emotions, which commonly give a pleasurable, however morbid, excitement to those yielding to their influence; or lastly, by the Minister, in his turn, voluntarily giving an importance to each individual of his congregation, thereby gratifying their self love, and thus gathering strength, so as to roll together a large and important mass. To none of these three modes does the Church of England Minister stoop: and happily for him, but still more happily for them, neither do his flock require it of him. The footing on which he is placed exempts him from influences of this kind; and for the most part, I believe, he avails himself of this his freedom: whilst the judicious amongst his flock, at least, wish him to do so: knowing how deceitful in the end must all attempts be to deal out partial or reserved representations of the Word of God, under either or all of the above-named influences. Yet amidst many advantages growing out of all this, one

^{*} It has been suggested to me, that this expression is a harsh one. Let the reader be assured, be he who he may, no offence is intended. It is only used, in strict correctness, of those Ministers who become such by their people's choice.—In the sense I use the word here, I have not the slightest objection myself to be called the creature of my patron: though I verily believe he does not wish me to be, any more than as a Minister of God's Word I would consent to be, his dependent.

manifest inconvenience is, that the Laity of our Church keep very much aloof from bearing any part in the advancement of obligations strictly religious: and to so great a pitch has this inconvenience arisen, that in populous parishes the Clergy are left alone to get through what a ten-fold accumulation of co-operating vigilance, strength, and exertion, would hardly, if at all, be equal to. Till this difficulty be got over,* the Church of England must in large Town parishes at least, be, as a religious community, in great measure, a rope of sand: and even in all parishes, under the present divided state of religion. But that it may be got over, the instances, happily far from solitary, wherein Lay co-operation is afforded on religious matters in due and reasonable subordination to pastoral influence, renders quite sufficiently evident to remove all doubt of its feasibility.

Another disadvantage too will ever belong to our Established Church. To keep the present world and the next in due relation to each other, is ever the unceasing object of our earthly trial. In adjusting this balance, it will not uncomonly be found; that those who rest in Establishments will exhibit grounds for apprehension (not to say, will be under actual danger), of being most "conformed to this world;" whilst those who mingle with Dissent (especially if not hereditarily) will seem to have done so out of an eager at least, even though mistaken, anxiety in the work of preparing for the next. And yet, after having taken this step, the Dissenter from choice, of whatever persuasion, will never be thoroughly proof against, on the contrary will

^{*} The system of Visiting Societies in many populous parishes is considerably and, it is hoped, increasingly supplying a remedy.

⁺ Permit me to say, I consider myself happy in the choice of this word. Those who repose in the still bosom of an Establishment, are far more to be congratulated, than those who embark on the stormy ocean of Dissent.

be under the greatest possible danger of, the ensnaring, but very unchristian sentiment, of "Stand by thyself, for I am holier than thou." Not that it follows, the Dissenter may not be holier than the Churchman, any more than that he may: but it is clearly a misfortune to himself if he thinks, and delights to encourage himself in thinking, he is. On the other hand, the region the Churchman moves in makes him liable, it must be repeated, to the danger of a greater admixture of worldliness with his profession, unless he makes personal effort to the contrary. The consequence of this is, that whilst those in the Church think themselves secure both in the possession of their religion, and the continuance of it without any effort of theirs, proselytism is the frequent if not prevailing bias of those out of the Church! and every effort is made to augment numbers, external manifestation, and influence. Amidst all this, the Church sits comparatively silent; whilst thousands nursed with her milk, have been torn violently or covertly from her bosom.

A stronger proof of this, as far as we are locally concerned, cannot be produced, than the Table of Religious Charities within the Church already given:* on which I must crave permission to enlarge here a little. I should hardly be afraid to say, that if the sum total of this Table could be compared, as that of a whole county, with that of any one of the largest amongst the largest Dissenting Communities, the aggregate wealth of the whole County, in the Church of England, and that of such Dissenting Community being also given; the proportion of aid to means would be found woefully against the Church. Now surely, if this is anything like the truth, this ought not so to be. Is the Church of England, in the opinion of its members, as worthy of support, as any separating fraternization is in the opinion of its brethren? If so, why should the wealth and

^{*} See page 53.

support in the former case, be so much less commensurate than in the latter? Is it that Conformity must always be sparing, Non-conformity always generous? Is irreflection, savouring of worldliness, to be a broad lineament in the face of an Establishment, whilst religious alms-giving is to stand prominent on the visage of Dissent? Shall Unity and Parismony, Division and Cheerful-giving, be found just and prevailing synonimes? Forbid it, brethren of the Church of England! Forbid it in particular, ye who have the means of doing so! Let a holy emulation, a godly jealousy, take possession of you, that no religious community shall approach nearer to the National one in eleemosynary acts of religion, than it does in comprehension of faith, and number of adherents! Let this stain be blotted out from the book of remembrance against us! Be but this spot removed, and other fruits, I trust, will ensue: fruits of "unity, peace, and concord!"

Towards the fulfilment of this wish, a remark presents itself which I know not how here to withhold, having already uttered it in the presence of some of the class now addressed, one of whom, I grieve to say, (talis cum sis, utinam noster esses!) has some time joined the ranks of another Communion.* It is this. I am disposed to think,

^{*} As in the conversation alluded to, Image Worship happened to form a leading topic for argument; the following cogent remarks of Bishop Jeremy Taylor, on that subject, are subjoined.—"I instance in the question of images, the making of some of which and the worshipping of any, does at the first sight as plainly dash against the Second Commandment, as adultery does against the Sixth. But if you examine the practice of the Roman Church, and estimate them by the more wary determination of the Article in Trent, and if you take the commandment over against their (the Roman Church's) devices and distinctions, it will not be easy to tell what the Commandment does mean, and yet because it was given to the meanest understandings, and was fitted for them, either the Conscience is left without a clear rule, or that sense is to be followed which stands nearest the light, that which is next to the natural and proper sense of the words."—Ductor Dubitantium, Book i. Chap. 1. Rule vi.

that so strong a chivalrous spirit* for their religion does not actuate the Nobility and Gentry of England, as is perhaps found to prevail in other countries, that might be named: or at any rate, as in other days of our own Church have manifested themselves. That we have many, many Laymen of rank and affluence visibly attached to her interests, I am thoroughly convinced, and record with thankfulness, as my deliberate conviction: and that the County from which I write possesses its full share of such, has been stated in the front of this attempt. But that in all parts of England it is far more partial, than the present position of our Church and complexion of its affairs renders desirable, cannot, I think, be either concealed from others, or dissembled within ourselves. Perhaps if the attempt were made to account for this as charitably, as I firmly believe it might be to a very considerable extent, truly and justly; it might be said that a very considerable source of this consists in the modest, retiring character of the Church of England, and particularly on the subject of religion, of the highest rank of its members. With all, but with them and even the best of them particularly, the Text in the New Testament which affirms that "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation,"+ is far more readily acted on than the direction to "let their light shine before men." Now this amiable, and, under proper limitations, truly Christian feeling, may assuredly be carried too far: and what in degree is beautiful and lovely, may actually in excess (especially in a distinguished station), border on something highly

^{*} The modern writer of "The Broad Stone of Honour," aims to shew (successfully or not, I leave Protestants to determine) that chivalry belongs to Popery; or, if the term is preferred by any, Romanism.

t The precise and undoubted meaning of this Text is not pretended to be given here. All that is aimed at is, to apply one supposed meaning of it to the present topic.

mistaken, if not positively wrong. I am almost disposed to hope, that with the spirit which actuates a large proportion of those now addressed, even slightly to advert to the danger, is to diminish, if not wholly to remove it.

At the close of the high argument here undertaken, I am loth to appeal with such a body as those now conferred with, to anything so sordid as what may be called motives of self interest and preservation. Yet as it was engaged in an early stage of this enquiry, to shew in the sequel, "how nearly it concerns those addressed;"* and as this view of it is in truth far from being without its share of importance to others, in common with those whom it more personally concerns; I should hardly do justice to my design in forbearing wholly from touching on this point. Thus then I beg to state it. It is impossible for it to have escaped the notice of the most inobservant, how the popular principle (and that perhaps in its very worst shape) has found its way into the important region of religion. That religious truth has suffered greatly from the extent to which it has done so, I am solemnly and reflectingly convinced: but I believe farther, that wounds hardly less deep have been inflicted from the same quarter on social peace and subordination also. The broad principle of separation from the Church is unrestrained licence of private opinion: the not less visible symbol of churchmanship in these realms is commonly, if not generally, that of deference to the constituted ministry. In the first of these two are manifestly involved seeds of division, self-sufficiency, and impatience of controul; whilst from the second, fruits may be infallibly looked for of peace, modesty, and social selfrestraint, if nothing else. There is another principle too almost indissolubly connected with separation from the

National Church: viz. jealousy of established, settled things. How unfavourably this spirit, fed and pampered, may operate on fit and wholesome opinion respecting the rights of property; and how restlessly, in this particular, the influence of popular commotion may act upon the social frame; these are hardly times to make it safe to dwell on. This, however, may without danger be stated: that as turbulent, factious infidelity, has too often sought and found encouragement for its subtle designs in the lurking-places of Dissent; so there is no surer guarantee to the settlement and stability of existing things, than that which is found in the peaceful repose of the bosom of a National Church.

It will not be unseemly in this connection to add a few words of respectful appeal to a higher and more generous spirit, and therefore one more in keeping with your birth, station, and fortune,-that of gratitude. A very large portion of those now appealed to have been educated at our Public Schools and Universities. From the former of the two I have no doubt you are conscious of having received many substantial and important advantages, which have by no means ended with quitting the scene of them, but have followed you largely into after-life: from the latter it is not easy to estimate the benefits you have received: and without passing the slightest affront on your powers of judgment and self-knowledge, the extent of them is of a nature that I verily believe you are yourselves not fully conscious of. My reasons for this opinion I will briefly unfold. In the first place, amongst the unthinking, (as I must call them, notwithstanding I have more than once heard them fall from the lips of one of your own rank, whose memory, he being now departed, I shall ever cherish with emotions of profound respect and

gratitude,) amidst the unthinking (I say) cavils made too generally by all above the middling class, against the public observances of religion maintained at those distinguished Seminaries, as if they were not only mere forms, but actually even worse than forms; I am not the least afraid to affirm in the face of the world, and for the honour of the religion I profess, that no moral, sentient Being can come within the reach of such ordinances, without benefit: benefit, the real extent and value of which he is at the time, and perhaps even ever after in this world, not fully conscious of. Without daring to arrogate a larger share of this consciousness than others, I scruple not to repeat a sentiment once uttered, when this topic was under discussion; that for myself I cannot bring back to my recollection a single occasion on which I have attended these ordinances whether in youth or manhood, without benefit: and I verily believe I never did: whilst in the manner, and under the circumstances under which this worship is conducted in buildings I could name, that mind must be low indeed, which can enter them without carrying away from them feelings of elevation and devotion.-Not to dwell any longer, however, on this topic, let me add farther, that at the Universities particularly, those who have been more or less associated during their academical course with the Seniors, Tutors, and Governors of the place, cannot, I am persuaded, have done so without advantage: or without having the seeds sown of the very practical wisdom itself. that perhaps now distinguishes them above their Teachers, in a degree that they may not be aware of. If this be any thing like the truth, I am sure, upon the bare suggestion, gratitude will so readily respond, that the tribute both of alms-giving and influence will readily be thrown back into

the bosom from whence these have flowed. To gnerous minds, such as those now appealed to—and not less elicate than generous, perhaps too much has been said in this point already.

One more very interesting feeling let me again ddress myself to, to which the hearts addressed, will, I elieve. send a ready answer: viz. that of religious symphy between the upper ranks and those below them. Tl value of this sympathy is quite inestimable. Yet its exience is at present as scanty in practice, as it is lovely inheory. The whole of this evil (and is it not one?) arises fre their not "walking in the house of God as friends:" fre their attending different modes of worship; hearing ferent strains of preaching; falling into different associans altogether of religious sentiment. With the largestass of separatists so often referred to, this alienating eff is so likely to arise, from the influence of one dogma in picular very prevalent amongst them; that I question if thearts of the best of that class could be poured forth in their fulness, as respects those above them in the Chur even those for whose charities and exemplary conduct † may have the highest respect; whether there would notfound engraved there some such sentiment as the follig:-"They are very good moral people: rich in govorks after a certain sense, of a certain sort: but they n the dark as to the greatest of all points: they have to be new-born." If I ascribe this sentiment to one since ast where it is not to be found, I ask pardon: and e it is found, I protest against being understood as ding it from the strictest religious integrity. But if sin impression exists largely, and it happens to turn chave no foundation, I am very sure your penetration vscera

at one the importance to our social health and happiness. of you aiming to widen the communion and "lengthen the cords'of the Church, after the manner and spirit humbly and repectfully suggested in a former part of this undertaking It is this conviction that has induced me to say in a forer place, that the religion of the upper ranks ought (I men for social good) to be the religion of a far greater majoty of the whole nation than it now is. The ground of wch assertion is simply this. Every christian patriot will ish one of two things to happen with regard to a Natial Church. Either that such a church should get rid every thing that involves in it solid, substantial grods for rational, reflecting objection; or that even wheit does not do so, the great bulk of the people of the landould weigh with the seriousness it deserves, the propty, or the contrary, of separating from such a church, on ; but the most essential and fundamental grounds.

I very important sentiment brings me to one concludingic, which I could hardly satisfy my views of the presenbject without concluding with. I mean, the recent imput Statutes of partial repeal of the Corporation and Te.cts, and what is commonly called the Catholic Relief Bi Upon both these measures, the present moment is too an one, to make it either becoming or desirable to giny retrospective opinion. But, in connection with thesent subject, I am sure I may be fairly entitled to saite independent of the alledged grounds of necessity, exency, and public benefit, which were stated as the me causes of them), that as a Clergyman, bound by ements previous to these recent enactments, to be "I with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all neous and strange doctrines, contrary to God's

word;"* I do continually and perpetually find my conscience entangled and perplexed by the operation of these modern enactments on that prior obligation: prior, I mean, in point of time. From the state of my feelings on this point, my moral and spiritual health has suffered. There are those of your own rank who could explain this.—Meanwhile, I have only to say further on this point; should the bonds of Communion with the Church of England have been in any degree slackened by these enactments; it becomes an increased duty on the part of its Members, (whether Clergy or Laity) as long as they continue such; and amongst them, of those in particular who hold stations of rank and influence; to cherish its interests with increased care, earnestness, and vigilance, so as to "strengthen the things which remain."

Thus having said, my Lords and Gentlemen, I respectfully retire. In what has gone before, I trust I have expressed myself at once in terms of respectful deference, and unfeigned ministerial solicitude for a Church I dearly love. I am free, I hope, from the imputation of all personal considerations of any sort or kind in what I have said. "I have coveted no man's silver or gold, or apparel: yea, this (mind: for 'hands' I have none: they are tied by my profession: this mind, such as it is) hath ministered unto my necessities, and to them that are with me." I close with the sentiment with which I began:—" Great cause of joy and thankfulness will belong to (this attempt), should it find acceptance with those to whom it is addressed:" and likewise with the peaceful valediction of the Apostle, adopted and offered by me with unfeigned respect:—

^{*} Form of Ordering of Priests.

"Finally, brethren, farewell: Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

With sentiments of public deference and good-will,

I am,

My Lords and Gentlemen,

Your obedient, humble Servant,

FRANCIS MEREWETHER.

COLE ORTON RECTORY, April 12th, 1832.

POSTSCRIPT.

To the Note in page 32, recent occurrences urge me to make the following addition.—In the Standard of March 29th last (in which Paper also of about the same date, a Letter from a Correspondent appears, complaining of the speeches against the Irish Tithe Resolutions having been garbled in the Newspapers, whilst those for them were given fully and accurately,) the under-named two Members of Parliament are stated to have spoken in their places the following words, on the day preceding, March 28th:

Mr. Dawson.—"Whatever Gentlemen opposite might think, he knew that there was a strong abhorrence in the country against overthrowing church property, and against establishing a Catholic ascendancy in Ireland."

Sir Charles Wetherell—"contended that commutation or a rent charge was not a substitute"—for Tithes.







